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HOW TO SAVE THE PERFORMING ARTS

(By Michael M. Kaiser)

The world of the performing arts is sick and needs attention. Several underlying problems currently affecting the ecology of the arts were in evidence long before the stock market collapse and Sept. 11, 2001. They need to be addressed, not simply accepted as an unsolvable result of the environment in which we live.

The arts world needs leadership. It needs concerted action. And it needs them fast. There are five key issues that must be addressed if we are to solve the problems arts organizations face today.

1. Such organizations must once again be willing to develop and implement large-scale, important projects that are risky and emerging. The arts world used to produce numerous big, daring projects each year; the construction of major arts facilities from Lincoln Center to the Kennedy Center, the production of large-scale dramatic works, such as "Nicholas Nickleby," the mounting of new Ring Cycles, even by small opera companies. It wasn't so long ago that Alvin Ailey or George Balanchine would create four or five or even six new works in a season. Now a choreographer is lucky to be able to produce one major work a year.

We have been scared into thinking small. And small thinking begets smaller revenue that begets even smaller institutions and reduced public excitement and involvement. No wonder so many arts organizations are announcing record deficits.

The Sondheim Celebration we mounted this summer at the Kennedy Center is one example of the kind of project I am hoping to see duplicated by others. We took a large but measured risk, and it paid off handsomely. The level of press coverage was phenomenal. The way the Kennedy Center is perceived has changed dramatically. We will never be the same institution again. We must all be thinking large and creatively at this time. That is what the arts are about.

2. If arts organizations, large and small, are going to take risks on meaningful projects and maximize their impact, they need entrepreneurial management better suited to the current climate in which they operate. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent throughout the world each year training young performers, but only a small fraction of that amount is devoted to training the people who will employ and market these performers. While several universities mount arts management programs, they are not sufficient to fill all our needs. There is no shortage of great artists in this world, but there is a shortage of trained, skilled managers.

We are operating in a highly challenging environment, and only the most sophisticated managers will be able to acquire the support needed to help their organizations thrive. I hope serious arts funders will begin to pay far more attention to this need; otherwise, we will see a serious decline in arts institutions throughout the world.

3. As we train arts managers, we must actively focus on the needs of all kinds of arts organizations.

The arts world is moving close to becoming a virtual cartel of a few large mainstream organizations that survive and thrive. This would be catastrophic. A healthy arts ecology demands that we have large and small organizations, mainstream and edgy, and of all ethnic backgrounds. The theater world, for example, has lost many of its minority organizations in the past few years. Those that remain are terribly small compared with their white counterparts.

We who run large arts organizations have become so scared about keeping our organi-

zations solvent that we have forgotten we will have a healthy arts environment only if we support the smaller and diverse organizations that create great works, great artists and new audiences. The tradition that created the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Ballet Hispanico and the now-defunct Crossroads Theater is close to evaporating.

4. The need for diversity in performers and performing institutions is equally strong with respect to audiences. Alvin Ailey said that "dance is for everyone." I know he meant that "art is for everyone." We are heading toward a world where only white, upper-middle-class people come to the theater, because only white, upper-middle-class children are being exposed to the theater. Public school arts education is virtually dead, not just in the United States but in most countries.

The Kennedy Center, like most arts organizations, has jumped into the breach. We spend \$15 million each year on arts education, working actively with 5 million children around the United States. But our efforts are not coordinated with those of other arts organizations, and the arts exposure enjoyed by virtually every child is episodic. For some children in some schools, the exposure is tremendous; other children may get no arts programming for years. We owe every child in this nation a chance to experience the joy of self-expression, the power of discipline and the self-fulfillment of achievement that come from the performing arts.

5. Finally, we must address the need to record the performances of merit that are mounted each day of the year.

The collapse of the recording industry, the lack of resources available to public broadcasting to record performances and the prohibitive costs of producing recordings and videos mean that it is easier to obtain a recording of Enrico Caruso than of most great opera singers today. We need the support of PBS, the unions and all artists to ensure that an entire generation of performances is not lost.

This is critical if we are to create the history of performance and creativity that inspires future generations and that allows for performances enjoyed by a few to be available to many. The Kennedy Center broadcasts on the Internet the daily free concerts we give on our Millennium Stage. But so many more performances in our halls and in theaters around the world go unrecorded.

If we can take all these necessary steps, we will create an arts ecology that can withstand the horrors of terrorism, economic decline and social unrest. If we don't, even a healthy economic and social climate will not save us.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO ELMO JOHNSON

• Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, it is my honor to rise today in recognition of an outstanding World War II veteran from Wisconsin, Mr. Elmo Johnson. Originally from Black River Falls, Mr. Johnson joined the Army in 1945 and was stationed near Guam at Saipan. A trumpet player since the age of 11, he played for the troops as part of the 285th AGF Band Unit. Mr. Johnson also organized a band called Swingmasters which performed at local Saipan clubs.

Later in his career, while stationed at Iwogima, Japan, he started to play Taps for his unit. Ever since returning from World War II, Mr. Johnson has

volunteered to play Taps at funerals for other Wisconsin veterans. He has been a member of the Black River Falls Miles-Hagen American Legion Post for over 50 years, and was named commander in 1946. Mr. Johnson has played Taps over 950 times, and I praise his goal of 1,000 farewells. His band, renamed "Elmo Johnson and the Johnny Brass Band," performs extensively throughout Western Wisconsin.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions Mr. Elmo Johnson and other brave veterans have made to the State of Wisconsin. We honor Mr. Johnson as he continues to demonstrate his generous spirit by sharing his musical gift around the State.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-392. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "NMFS reduces the trip limit in the commercial hook-and-line fishery for king mackerel in the northern Florida west coast subzone to 500 lb (227 kg) of king mackerel per day in or from the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). This trip limit reduction is necessary to protect the Gulf king mackerel resource" received on December 17, 2002; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-393. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "NMFS closes the commercial fishery for king mackerel in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the northern Florida west coast subzone. This closure is necessary to protect the Gulf king mackerel resource" received on December 17, 2002; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-394. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Closure Notice for Black Sea Bass Fishery; Commercial Quota Harvested for Quarter 4" received on December 17, 2002; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.